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THESES

1934

The Relationship of the Sacred to the World  
in Religious Experience

Stewart Edward Locke

The Centrality of the Value Element  
in Christian Thought

Richard Albery Morgan

A Study of the Religious Experience

Volume V

Recent Theology of the American Church

Bartholomew J. H. H. H.

FOR THE COURSE OF STUDY IN THEOLOGY

The Christian Church in the Twentieth Century

Edward Feltus Perry

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION







C O N T E N T S

FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

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The Conflict of Jesus with the Pharisees

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THE RELATION OF THE MYSTICAL TO THE MORAL  
IN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

BY

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A. B. UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, 1931

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN THE

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

IN THE

PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

1934





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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is born out of a desire that has gradually been taking form to reaffirm the unique character of the religious experience, to justify its claim to completeness without reference to any other type of experience, and to do something toward rescuing it from its association in the minds of many with such words as "vague", "misty", "indefinite", "ephemeral", etc. Instead of the term "religious experience" I might use the term "mystical experience", but I hesitate to use the word "mystic" because its similarity in sound to the word "misty" prejudices the reader from the very outset. The only way in which the word "misty" may be used in reference to the religious experience is by analogy, and then to convey the idea that it cannot be subjected to the conceptualizing activity of the mind, and not that it is unreal.

The problem I am here attempting to deal with began to take form from my reading of Plato's "Apology" in which Socrates, as he stands before the citizens of Athens in his own defense, tells of a 'demon' or 'spirit' which invades his consciousness and warns him against some contemplated deed. That singled<sup>s</sup> out a characteristic of my own religious experience which I have felt with increasing conviction ever since. In the case of Socrates it seemed to be a restraining influence. It never, he said, told him what to do in



any case. It only warned him against some contemplated action. But it is of significance that he did not call it conscience. This experience of Socrates was not what Kant called the categorical imperative, the innate sense of 'ought' which is the possession of every person born into the world. It was not primarily ethical. It was, if we may use the term, supra-ethical, and it is this element which manifests itself in experience in other ways than it did to Socrates which we are seeking to take account of, believing that it is necessary to the understanding of the essential nature of religion.

However, we realize that any such effort as this which attempts to be a contribution to the problem of understanding religion in all its aspects must not leave one part of religious experience unrelated to the other parts.

I shall endeavor not only to single out from our experience the element peculiar to the religious experience alone, but try to show its relation in the total frame of what is loosely called religion.

Briefly stated, I am attempting to show the relation between the mystical and the ethical approaches to religion with an attempt at harmonizing or synthesizing the two.

In dealing with such a problem as this, there arise numerous question of epistemology and metaphysics adequate treatment of which would seem to require more complete pre-





paration in the field of philosophy than I have. I would justify the undertaking first on the ground that I am dealing primarily with experience which should be the starting point of philosophy and not with a completed system of philosophy which may and often does reject the primary elements of experience because they do not fit into its scheme of things; and secondly, I would justify it in the belief that I am not dealing with a merely academic problem which has no relation to life, but that its solution will help to determine the effectiveness of the Christian gospel as it is presented from the pulpits.

The first test that is put forth as to the worth of any undertaking is the test of its practical value. The proponents of the social gospel are emphasizing the social and ethical side of Christianity and are paying scant attention to that side of it which might come under the head of mysticism. In this emphasis they have been following largely in the footsteps of the tradition first strictly formulated by Kant which views religion as essentially a derivative of ethics and dependent upon it for its meaning. Over against this position we wish to affirm the fundamental difference between ethics and religion not that we may maintain this separation in practice but that social religion may not lose the vital spirit without which ethics is in danger of becoming an imposition upon society by a few deluded persons who delight in making life difficult for other people.





Religion has its roots in spirit. In its primitive form it is non-moral and becomes moralized as social relations become more complex. But in this moralizing, or, as Otto says, rationalizing process, there lies a danger that the spirit from which it derives life and vitality may be lost.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have always been two quite distinct approaches to the interpretation of religion. One is best represented by Kant who viewed religion as a derivative of the moral imperative. Religion to him was moral law viewed as divine commands. A more modern representative of essentially the same position is Höffding who, approaching the subject by way of value theory, sees in religion not a unique type of value experience but a faith in the conservation of values, making the value experience of religion secondary and dependent upon the primary experience of ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual values.

The other approach is best represented by Schleiermacher who attempted to rescue religion from subservience to ethics and establish it in its own right. He sought a unique element in the religious experience, an element which is found in no other type of experience. He found this in what he called 'the feeling of dependence'. This which was essentially a psychological analysis was given philosophical



standing by the German theologian, Troeltsch, who sought to establish religious experience on an a priori basis in the manner of Kant. The latest and most satisfactory defender of the religious a priori is Rudolph Otto who, in "The Idea of the Holy", analyzes the category of the 'holy'. The main task of this thesis is the exposition and elucidation of this 'religious' a priori and its relation to the moral a priori.

We may state the problem briefly under three heads:

- (1) The mystic's way of approach to knowledge of God.
- (2) The moral a priori as an approach to the knowledge of God.
- (3) The relation between the two above approaches and an attempt at a synthesis of them.





## PSYCHOLOGY AND MYSTICISM

The first question which presents itself is one of psychology. Is there an emotion peculiar to religion alone? There has been much controversy and little agreement over this question. In general there are two characteristic positions regarding human emotions: there are those who insist upon the qualitative differences between emotions and maintain that there are as many different emotions as there are qualities, and there are those who seek those elements which different emotions have in common and classify them on the basis of their similarities. A representative of the first type is William McDougall who says "We must recognize that each sentiment for each object is unique. Even the mother of many children loves each child in a different way".<sup>1</sup> In our analysis we are proceeding on essentially this position. Just how far McDougall is to be defended in this position we are not prepared to say, but it is essential to make use of the principle underlying it to understand the analysis of the 'numinous' experience.

There is a general failure on the part of psychologists as well as others to note the qualitative differences which actually exist between many emotions bearing the same name. This is due to three things: (1) the poverty of our language.

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<sup>1</sup> McDougall, William "Outline of Psychology", p. 431.



An example of this is seen in the failure of our language to indicate the difference between at least two kinds of love which we discriminate perfectly in our consciousness, namely, love which exists between persons of the opposite sex, and love of, for instance, the mother for her child; (2) lack of introspective powers in many people, and varying degrees of that power within the same person at various times, depending upon a good many factors, among which is condition of health, mental and physical. There is a close connection between this factor and the language factor mentioned above. It has been noted that oftentimes we become aware of facts of our experience only after a word has been invented which fits that particular aspect of experience. It is only those whose introspective powers are particularly keen who are able to distinguish these differences not already indicated by language. Indeed it is through such people as these that words are invented and ideas come to be. (3) the conceptualizing function of the human mind. Experience is always "particular", that is, it doesn't point to anything beyond itself. But the mind in its attempt to understand it does not leave it particular but proceeds to analyze it and classify its constituent elements under categories or in terms of universals. This classifying process is also a simplifying process. Two experiences, or things, having certain factors in common are classified on the basis of that which they have in common. The things which differentiate them are, for the sake of simplicity, ignored. Now





this is legitimate in cases where the differentia are of minor importance as far as the immediate task at hand is concerned. For example, in trying to correctly place the Hottentot in the animal kingdom we may classify him as homo sapiens, that classification including as well every race under the sun. But if we want to know something more about him, say his average height and weight, our general classification won't help us. We must now turn to the things which differentiate him from the other races which come under the general classification, homo sapiens. These differentia now become of prime importance in understanding anything about the Hottentot in particular. Any one who says that these are of no real significance is simply obscuring the issue. This may seem like an unnecessarily long exposition of a very simple and obvious principle, yet simple and obvious as it is, it has been overlooked again and again not only by laymen but by leaders in the field of psychology.

These three factors then: the poverty of our language, lack of introspective power in many people, and the conceptualizing function of the mind lead to the failure to note-- or the ignoring of--qualitative differences between emotions.

But why all this emphasis upon noting these differences? Because the main attack upon religion as a particular emotion or form of feeling has come from psychologists who ignore these differences.

There is abroad a loose conception of religion as some-



how connected with man's sexual nature. The more or less specific form in which we find it today may, I think, be traced back through one branch of psycho-analysis to Freud, who viewed the sex drive as the basis of all human activity, and its satisfaction as the goal toward which all human experience and activity moves. It is not our purpose to examine the theories of Freud, but to consider a psychological treatment of religion that has gained a wide influence, i.e., Leuba's work, "The Psychology of Religious Mysticism." Leuba does not go so far as to reduce all religious experience to <sup>sex</sup> drive, but he does take the more general position of which Freud's is only one particular phase, that we need not go beyond the physiological and psychological condition of any person to find the explanation for so-called mystical or religious experience. Physiology and psychology, that is, can fully explain religious experience.

In Chapter V of his volume Leuba undertakes to discover the sources of motivation of Christian mysticism. "The behavior of the mystics", he writes, "like everybody else, is instigated by innate tendencies to action and by needs that express themselves in forms determined mainly by experience. The tendencies and needs that come to expression with especial intensity in our group of mystics (meaning some of the well known mystics of the Christian church such as Dionysius, St. Francis, Hugo of St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Catherine of Genoa, St. John of the Cross, Madam Guyon, Suso,





St. Theresa, etc.,) may be listed as follows: 1. The tendencies to self-affirmation and the need for self-esteem. 2. The tendencies to cherish, to devote oneself to something or to somebody.... 3. The needs for affection and moral support. 4. The need for peace, for single-mindedness or unity, both in passivity and in action. 5. "Organic" needs or needs for sensuous satisfaction (especially in connection with the sex life)."<sup>1</sup>

There can be no quarrel with this statement of the motivation of the Christian mystic. If any criticism of the list of motives given were to be made, I think it would be on the basis of its incompleteness. Von Hügel says that "the thirst of religion is at bottom a metaphysical thirst".<sup>2</sup> The mystics, I think, would not fail to classify this among the first of the motives inspiring them in their religious search.

Our most serious objection to Leuba, however, comes at another point entirely. He, in common with others who adopt the same method as he does, makes the assumption that a phenomenon of human experience once described is thereby explained. A psychological report is taken to be an explanation.

There are several characteristics of the mystical experience, some of which are intended to be a psychological

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<sup>1</sup> Leuba, James "The Psychology of Religious Mysticism" pp.116, 117.

<sup>2</sup> Von Hügel "Essays and Addresses" p. 207.



report of the condition of the person undergoing the experience, some a description of the relation between the person and what is conceived to be the cause of the experience, and some a description of that cause. The first characteristic is that of certainty. This is a psychological description of the condition of the one having the experience. It is intended to be a psychological report. The next characteristic is that of immediacy and presents a problem which is not primarily psychological but epistemological. A third characteristic of it is some sort of affirmation concerning its cause such as: "this is reality"; or it may be a statement involving more detailed description of that 'reality' such as: "this is the ineffable one, the Whole". This presents a metaphysical problem.

Now Leuba's method is to take the introspective reports of mystics and set alongside them the reports of persons who have experimented with nitrous oxide gas, mescal, alcohol, and other such drugs. He finds in the reports of these experimenters with drugs every characteristic which the mystic finds in his experience. He examines the experiences of the better known mystics of the Christian church for signs of hysteria and neuresthenia and finds unmistakeable evidence of the mental abnormalities in them. His conclusion is that there is nothing in the so-called mystical experience which cannot be accounted for without appealing to a supernatural Being. For instance, in reply to James' contention, based





upon the assurance of all mystics, that there is a noetic element in the mystic experience, he says: "The truth-kernel of religious ecstasy is, as we have shown, no other than the truth-kernel of narcotic intoxication and of ecstatic trance in general." In short, "Should there be no ground of belief other than physical phenomena and inner experiences, then, for those who are acquainted with modern scientific conceptions, there could be no belief in God".

It is as difficult to answer the conclusions which Leuba comes to as it is to discover any particular instance in which he has proved anything. To be sure, he draws parallels between the reports of mystics and of those who have made no claim to any supernatural experience. But what of it? He has taken for granted the solution to the most crucial problem involved, the problem of interpretation. There are two possible interpretations which we may put upon the phenomena of narcotic intoxication and trance. The physiological conditions which accompany the trance may either be the sole cause (the conclusion which he infers) of the experience or (the alternative he ignores) it may be a necessary condition of the experience taking place. To use an analogy, a road or perfectly smooth stretch of ground is not the cause of an automobile going 200 miles an hour over

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<sup>1</sup> Leuba "The Psychology of Religious Mysticism", p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 304.



it, but it is an indispensable condition of its traveling at that rate of speed over it. Is it not altogether possible that inroads from the "Beyond" are not possible save as there is proper physiological and psychical preparation? Something like this seems to be the case, although no one has stated those conditions precisely, if indeed, they may be so stated at all.

But in granting this are we not leaving the door open to the claims of anyone who has experienced something unusual in narcotic intoxication or under peculiar mental stress? We instinctively withdraw from this position for ethical reasons if for no other. Is there no more sound criterion of the validity of the claim to divine revelation than some unusual quality of experience? The answer, as James saw, must come from the person having the experience. "Mystical states," he writes, "when they are well developed, usually are, and have a right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come", although "No authority emanates from them which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically."<sup>1</sup>

In admitting that narcotic trance may produce the physiological condition necessary to the extreme form of mystical experience we are not thereby claiming that every

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<sup>1</sup> James, W "Varieties of Religious Experience" p. 422.





experience which a person in such a condition reports must necessarily have those qualities which would make the subject claim for it a divine origin. Whether or not one in such a condition of intoxication shall claim for it divine origin will and must, by our criterion, depend on the person.

We are here dealing with the problem of illusion and error in perception. It is more than a merely psychological problem. To be sure, it is complicated by psychological factors, but its solution goes beyond psychology.

If we were to employ the method of Leuba, we might easily find a parallel illusory experience for every sense experience which we think we have in our normal waking life. If then we could sufficiently analyze the condition of mind and body of the person having the illusory experience, we would draw the inference that all sense experience was illusory. Such a thing appears absurd, yet that is the conclusion of the method which Leuba employs.

Leuba applies his method of analysis and criticism to man's sense of ought which is ordinarily regarded as the basis of man's moral nature. He finds the essence of this to consist in feelings of 'insistency' and 'imperativeness'. But these feelings are not characteristic alone of moral tendencies but also of non-moral. We recognize the foolishness of this insistency and imperativeness in many instances e.g., when we cannot rid our minds of the thought that we have not turned off the water before we went to bed. But





the cause of this lies in some physiological condition. In the central nervous system, some group of neurones is in a state of abnormal irritability and has become an open channel of discharge. But what of the sense of moral imperative? Leuba does not tell us specifically that this is some form of neural discharge, but lets us conclude that it too may be 'explained' in terms of physiology.

Perhaps the best refutation of the claims of these 'medical materialists', as James has called them, can be found in his own words. "According to the general postulate of psychology just referred to (that the spiritual experiences of Paul, Fox, et al were due to organic maladjustments) there is not a single one of our states of mind, high or low, healthy or morbid, that has not some organic process as its condition. Scientific theories are organically conditioned just as much as religious emotions are; and if we only knew the facts intimately enough, we should doubtless see 'the liver' determining the dicta of the sturdy atheist as decisively as it does those of the Methodist under conviction anxious about his soul." <sup>1</sup> "To plead the organic causation of a religious state of mind, then, in refutation of its claim to possess superior spiritual value, is quite illogical and arbitrary, unless one have already worked out in advance some psycho-physical theory connecting spiritual

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<sup>1</sup> James, W. "Varieties of Religious Experience" pp. 13-14.



values in general with determinate sorts of physiological change. Otherwise none of our thoughts and feelings, not even our scientific doctrines, not even our dis-beliefs, could retain any value as revelations of the truth, for every one of them without exception flows from the state<sup>1</sup> of their possessor's body at the time."

We need not labor the point further. It should appear obvious to us by this time that we must go beyond psychology for an explanation of mystical experience.

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<sup>1</sup> James, W. "Varieties of Religious Experience", p. 14.





## MYSTICISM AND EPISTEMOLOGY

We have already suggested that the solution of the problem of the validity of religious experience is epistemological rather than psychological. It is not primarily a question of fact, but one of interpretation. We now turn our attention to the problem of interpretation.

We may most clearly grasp the essence of the problem by briefly considering the two types of knowledge which play major parts in philosophical discussions. They are conceptual and perceptual. Conceptual knowledge is knowledge which is a product of our rational faculty. Perceptual knowledge is knowledge gained through perception or sense experience. The second type is often called empirical. The empiricist says that reality is revealed to man through his sense experience. Reason plays a secondary part in the knowing process. Its only legitimate function is to point back to experience.

Those who emphasize perceptual or empirical knowledge over and against conceptual are called empiricists. The intuitionist goes beyond the position of the ordinary empiricist and claims that we can reach reality only as we apprehend it directly and immediately. There must be nothing between the knower and the thing or object known, an extreme <sup>to</sup> in which the ordinary empiricist does not follow. Knowledge must be immediate. If you wish to know what reality is,



then sharpen your faculties of sense and know it immediately. Reason cannot reveal it to you. Reason is a substitute for intuition when your faculties of sense have become dull or you are not in a position to apprehend reality directly.

The rationalist who thinks that perceptual knowledge is also real answers the contentions of the intuitionist in something of this manner: there needs to be a check upon empirical observation to discover and eliminate error from it. Furthermore, the so-called reality which experience reveals is nothing more than a series of disconnected sensations. There must be some principles of unity else these disconnected experiences are meaningless.

Now it is obvious that we have unity even amidst diversity. The objects of experience are set in space and time. There seems to be a causal relation between them and many other relations as well. Where did these principle of unity come from? The rationalist says that experience does not give them to us. But if not experience, then the mind must have given them to us. The mind, in other words, brings to experience these principles of unity. They do not arise out of experience but are a priori.

We will have occasion to return to this concept of the a priori in other connections.

Let us now continue with the consideration of intuitionism. The intuitionist denies that the world of experience which he apprehends immediately is disconnected. To be sure





it is plural and not one but it has unity and we do not need to appeal to such things as a priori principles which the mind brings to experience. The unity is given if you look closely enough. William James believed that it was given in the 'stream of consciousness'. We do not experience time as a single point in the present. The present is not made up of just this instant. It is made up of this instant plus a gradually fading consciousness of the immediate past and a gradually increasing awareness of the immediate future. In our consciousness, we are not aware of an infinite succession of points of time which in themselves have no duration but we are, rather, aware of a flow of events. The principle of unity is thus given in experience itself and is revealed by careful introspection.

James, however, does not call himself an intuitionist. We have to turn to the French philosopher Bergson to find the intuitionist. We have not the space nor sufficient preparation to give an adequate account of the philosophy of Bergson. However, we may gain some insight into Bergson's method of approaching reality by understanding James. For Bergson, the mind instead of supplying the principles of unity which make experiences intelligible really falsifies reality. The intellect is selective. It picks out certain elements from experience and leaves the rest. Practical needs determine what the intellect shall pick out. But this falsifies reality. Not that this function of the intellect





is valueless. It is needed in meeting the practical problems of life, but it does not lead us to reality. To discover reality we must drop all practical considerations and turn to experience and there we will find reality.

We have alluded to the philosophy of James and Bergson that we may gain a more thorough understanding of the epistemological problems involved in mysticism. Mysticism as a method of knowing reality is a special form of intuitionism. The mystics, while not stating their positions in philosophical language, are intuitionists. They claim that reality is revealed to them directly.

However, the mystics differ sufficiently from intuitionists in general to warrant separate treatment. They agree in this, that reality to be known at all must be known immediately. But they differ from ordinary intuitionists as to what reality is. The intuitionist says that pure perception reveals reality to him. But the mystic is not content to let it stand that way. That phrase 'pure perception' is ambiguous to the mystic. He wants to know what the object of that 'pure perception' is. The intuitionist says it is the world of nature with all its sounds and sights and smells and tastes, etc., in short, whatever may come to him from without. But the mystic will not go so far as that. Some of the things revealed to man through experience are not truly real, and these things include the whole world of objects in space and time. The only reality for the mystic is



that immediately apprehended within his own soul, and that is God.

For the intuitionist reality may be in flux, in constant change, which, as for Bergson, may take the path of upward striving. But for the mystic, change is the essence of unreality. The intuitionist may emphasize the multiple aspects of reality, but the mystic tends to emphasize the unity of reality. And because of this insistence that 'true' reality is not of the natural order, the mystic tends to emphasize his own separateness from it in contrast to the tendency of the empirical intuitionist to identify himself with it as Bergson has done.

We might point out numerous other minor details in which mysticism differs from intuitionism in general, but this is sufficient to give us an understanding of the philosophical problems involved in the interpretation of mystical experience.

Let us now turn to a more specific consideration of some of these problems, looking toward a possible solution of them in the concept of the numinous as an a priori category.

The central issue in the problem of knowledge is this: how can there be knowledge in any real sense? To talk about knowledge at all one must presuppose a distinction between the object known and the knower. Without this distinction, the world of 'objects' consists of nothing more than the





states of consciousness of the individual. But, on the other hand, if this distinction is absolute then how is knowledge possible at all? The object known must somehow become a part of the consciousness of the knower without becoming identical with it.

The empiricists have characteristically solved the problem by maintaining that the object known is somehow represented in the consciousness of the knower through direct impression. The mystic goes even farther than the ordinary empiricist. He insists that the world of reality is not only represented to him in his consciousness but is actually there. It is actually 'possessed' without being identical with his consciousness. The rationalist holds that this is an oversimplification of the knowing process. The mind of the knower, he says, brings to the knowing process certain factors, some of which are indispensable for the knowing process and some of which are merely incidental but which nevertheless contribute something to the object known. (Hume believed that empiricism must end in skepticism as far as man's ability to know is concerned. All empirical observation gives is a series of disconnected events.) There is also another factor in the mystic perception beyond ordinary perception which complicates it. Reality, the mystic usually holds, is not morally neutral but is in its very essence moral. Attainment of pure perception of it requires moral discipline and it imposes ethical obligation upon the one



who attains to perception of it.

This is in sharpest contrast to the morally neutral character of the object of sense perception. The rationalist, in criticizing this contention of the mystic, maintains that perception by itself cannot reveal any such thing as moral obligation, that this is the contribution of man's rational faculties.

We thus have before us some of the main epistemological problems presented by mysticism as a way of knowing reality which it calls God. We have not pretended to give a systematic and comprehensive presentation of the metaphysical position underlying mysticism. We are interested in the metaphysical aspects of mysticism only as they are directly related to the problem of knowledge. We recognize, of course, that the two are ultimately inseparable, for the solution of one affects the solution of the other. This is particularly true in the case of mysticism, for in the effort to know what reality is the mystic discovers its metaphysical nature.

The main objection of the rationalist to the mystic thus seems to be that the mystic oversimplifies the knowing process. This means, in other words, that a more or less indeterminate part of what the mystic takes to be God is something contributed by the mind of the one having the experience of God. The question now becomes, how much of what the mystic attributes to God must be attributed to the mind





of the mystic? In other words, how much is psychological report and how much is a description of reality. The mystic says God is One. And on the basis of his supposed experience of God as one, all experience of reality as plural is illusory and reveals only a world of unreality. Now as Bennett in "A Philosophical Study of Mysticism" has pointed out, there is no fatal logical objection to the mystics' claim to the perception of reality as one any more than there is any fatal objection to the claim of any person to perception of any object in its entirety. "An exhaustive knowledge about the pen with which I now write is a task which would require the labours of physicist and chemist (to mention only these) until the end of time. Yet if I should be able to inherit the fruits of their labors, my knowledge would still be knowledge of this pen as I now simply perceive it in its wholeness."<sup>1</sup> The rationalist, however, in the name of practical needs of earthly life, demands this analysis, and he claims furthermore that qualities revealed in the analysis are just as true of it as the one quality revealed in perception of it as a whole, and are just as real.

However, we may say that the mystics report of reality as One may be a true metaphysical report and not just a psychological report of the state of consciousness of the mystic.

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<sup>1</sup> Bennett, "A Philosophical Study of Mysticism", p. 103.





What of his claim that reality is ineffable? Is this merely a psychological report? Is the mystic attributing to reality an ineffability which is in reality nothing more than the inability of his mind to analyze its own states of consciousness? There is undoubtedly something of this present, nor is it due to the particularly weak introspective powers of mystics. Quite to the contrary, they usually have greater introspective ability than persons not capable of having such experiences. We have already indicated the part which this and other factors such as language and the conceptualizing function of the mind play in introspective analysis.

This quality of ineffability goes deeper than the psychological state of the mystic. It is due to the nature of the object itself and is closely allied to the attribute of 'oneness' which we saw was predicated of God by the mystic. Because the reality apprehended is One, the predicates of ordinary sense experience cannot be applied to it. However, it is not to be understood that because it cannot be described in the language of ordinary perception that it therefore lacks all quality. Quite to the contrary, the negations of the mystics are only a means to clearing the path to a positive statement. In the words of James, "Their (the mystics) very denial of every adjective you may propose as

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<sup>1</sup>  
James, W. "Varieties of Religious Experience" p. 416.



applicable to the ultimate truth . . . though it seems on the surface to be a no-function, is a denial made on behalf of a deeper yes. Who so calls the Absolute anything in particular or says that it is this, seems implicitly to shut it off from being that - it is as if he lessened it. So we deny the this, negating the negation which it seems to imply in the interests of the higher affirmative attitude by which we are possessed."

But what does the mystic~~s~~ have to give toward a positive description of this reality he has experienced? Nothing. Man may only experience it.

This does not satisfy the person who is seeking for reality in terms of human concepts. However, we have found that there is epistemological ground for the mystics claim to the ineffability of his experience.

But what of his claim that his perception of reality reveals to him moral obligations? Here we must pause for a brief consideration of the meaning and function of morality to the mystic. The best known mystics have worked out for themselves a rigorous moral code and made every effort to adhere to it strictly. Yet the mystic never regards morality as an end in itself. It is always a means to an end, the attainment of the ineffable vision. Nor does adherence to this code win the follower <sup>any</sup>thing special. As far as oneness with God is the end of life, morality is merely a disciplinary exercise whose purpose is to purge man of earthly





affinities.

The denial of the ability of the 'world' to supply any predicates capable of being applied to the One is carried over into a denial of the ability of any of the virtues of the 'world' to grant man a vision of the One. The characteristic path of the mystic is thus the negative. Eschew desire, ambition, and all earthly loves that the inward spirit may find its unity with the One which is its native home.

If this is the outcome of mysticism, says the practical man of the world, of what good is it to the world? What contribution does it make to the solution of the moral problems of the race? We, of course, must recognize that mysticism has occasionally taken the path leading to antinomianism. This, however, does not represent the whole truth about the relation of mysticism to morality.

Strangely enough, "When we consider that most, perhaps all, of the original moral codes of the world have been propounded by mystics, there can be no doubt about the fertility of mysticism in this direction"<sup>1</sup>. How is this paradox to be explained? Hocking suggests that the solution is to be found in a simultaneous attitude of attachment and detachment which is necessary for any successful action.

"There are two kinds of temper not likely to succeed and not

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<sup>1</sup> Hocking, "Types of Philosophy", p. 410.



deserving to succeed in any important undertaking: the temper which cares nothing about it, and the temper which cares everything. A man who was completely indifferant to public office would not deserve to win such office; nor would he deserve it if it would break his will to lose it. A man is right in his efforts, and we respect him if he does his best to succeed and yet retains an inner immunity to success or failure because he is greater than any of his particular aims. What the mystic is doing in his discipline of negation is to secure that this inner immunity is a genuine fact of character and not an assumed pose.<sup>1</sup> This should sufficiently explain the concern of the mystic with right conduct.

However, our primary task is the solution of the problem of knowledge. The question therefore arises, does the mystic experience reveal any specific form of conduct as the right form? Granted that the attainment of unity with the One demands a certain moral discipline, does the attainment of that unity reveal an ethical code that can be used in the practical world? The rationalist says that regardless of the fact that the mystics may have contributed much to the ethical ideals of the race, that contribution has not come through their peculiar type of experience but has been a product of their rational faculty in its effort to adapt

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<sup>1</sup> Hocking, W.E. "Types of Philosophy" pp. 410-411.





itself to the world of things and other human spirits.

Ethical codes are a result of the experience of the race, and no amount of intuition can discover what forms of conduct suits in any given situation.

It is the custom in these days, to maintain the thesis that man discovers by observation of social<sup>ia</sup> relations that certain attitudes and certain ways of acting produce more desirable results in the life of individuals and of society than other attitudes and ways of acting; then, after he had discovered these, he imputes them to his God. In other words, the moral attributes of his gods always lag a little behind his discoveries in the field of social relations. For example, Jahveh of the ancient Hebrews was conceived to be a god of vengeance because the law of vengeance was required by the state of ~~c~~ulture in ~~w~~hich the ancient Hebrews were. Then some particularly observant person saw that the principle of just retribution was a better foundation for the ordering of society. Now perhaps to give his new 'insight' a note of authority, the person making the 'discovery' attributes it to Jahveh, and says that Jahveh has revealed it to him, whereas actually, so the current explanation runs, he has discovered it from observing the solution of actual problems in human social relations.

Superficially, the argument is plausible enough to win assent. But it is not satisfactory. It rests upon an assumption whose fallacy is easily understood when simply





stated. Let us turn to a simple question. Which is logically and psychologically prior, the motive for an act or the act? Obviously the motive is. If the motive is not prior, then in any real moral order there is really no act. For example: a man is killed. Disregarding the legal definition of murder which takes account only of acts and not of intentions, a murder is not committed unless some person has intended to commit murder. Accidental killing is not murder (a fact which our legal codes are gradually coming to recognize). The motive or will or intention of a person is required before an act becomes meaningful.

Now in the problem we have been considering which came first, the just act or the intention and will to be just? Obviously it could not be said that any particular act could be called just unless the person committing the act had the previous intention of being just. But where did he get that intention? Our hypothetical opponent might answer, from seeing a just act done? But, I reply, how did he come to recognize it as just? Not from its practical results, for such outwardly 'just' acts and their practical results must have existed long before this first recognition came, and if not, and this is the first just act that has been committed, then the presupposition must be that the person observing the results of the act already has some inkling of the key to the interpretation of the act, else he would not be looking for the results of the act to find out if they were just. Thus,



in either case some notion of the meaning of justice is necessary before there can be any observation of a just act. And since that notion cannot have come from observing of just acts it must have had some other source.

And here the intuitionist comes forward with a suggested answer. There is planted in the spirit of man a faculty of comprehension of the divine nature, and as man makes himself responsive to it, the divine will is revealed to him.

The religious history of Israel would seem to support this contention as much or even more than it supports the opposite contention that the gods reflect the moral attainments of a society at any given stage.

The conception of God as love came at a time when social and political institutions embodied the 'power' ethic.

It might seem that we are splitting hairs over a distinction of minor importance. Yet the issue is one of great importance both for the sake of theoretical understanding of the nature of religion and for the sake of future practical advances in the morality of our day. Is it possible to experiment with new forms of social control and achieve any significant advance without a previous religious preparation? To come to a specific issue, must not our own inner self which the mystic never tires of affirming is of the same substance with God, be in the true mystical sense of the term one with God before we shall ever be able to fully appreciate, to say nothing of achieving, the Kingdom of God. Its outward form may exist long before men attain to, or are





granted, the inward vision of its meaning. And as long as that inward vision is withheld, the outward form will be no better than the unholy thing we now call our capitalistic order.

We are thus brought back to our problem of epistemology. The rationalist has a criticism to make of our idea of the source of ethical ideals. This, he says, like the intuitionists theory of knowledge which oversimplifies the knowing process, oversimplifies the process by which we arrive at our ethical ideals. The intuitionist leaves out of account the important part which man's rational faculty contributes to the formulation of ethical ideals and moral codes. The statement that we have given above concerning the way new moral concepts originate is true as far as it goes, but it is not the whole truth. Moral codes do not suddenly come into being full fledged. They are a product of long experimentation and testing in the laboratories of human experience. While recognizing that the discovery of new ethical ideals is from 'above' and not from 'without', they progress from the nebulous state of the intuition to practical embodiment in moral codes through the efforts of reason. In Kantian language they undergo 'schematisation'.

We earlier made a distinction between the world which the intuitionist views as the world of real objects and the world which the mystic views as such. The mystic thinks the intuitionist's changing, evolving world the essence of un-



reality.

Now there may be lurking in the mind of the reader a question as to just where this object of the apprehension of the mystic is. The mystic denies that it is objective in the ordinary sense of the term. To understand the mystic's position we need to make ourselves aware of the 'form' into which ordinary perception is fitted. Whenever the person used to thinking in common sense terms, thinks of an experience, analyzes an experience, he differentiates between the subject or one who is experiencing and the object or the thing experienced. Now it is obvious that the terms subject and object suggest spatial relations. This spatial relation is taken for granted from force of habit. But space and time are unreal to the mystic. He insists that the subject-object relation in perception be maintained while doing away with the spatial relation. The mystic perceives his God within himself. This is to be differentiated from subjective idealism in philosophy which views its own mental states as the whole of reality. While maintaining the essential unity of his own inner spirit or self with God, and while he even goes to extremes in self-negation, yet the distinction between himself and the One with whom he has found union is never completely lost. The subject-object relation exists within himself.

This is of vital importance in considering some of the traditional philosophical conceptions of God. God has been





conceived of as the 'Totality' the 'Whole' and other such abstractions which have somehow been identified with the sum total of the objective world. Such conceptions were satisfactory to certain philosophers till physical science began prying into the physical universe. Then neither the telescope nor the microscope could by much searching find anything remotely resembling this hypothesis of explanation. Naive religion, somehow thinking of God as an object in much the same manner, though not stating its position in philosophical language, found its God in much the same position as the God of the philosophers. Out of this arose much of the so-called conflict between science and religion. Actually it was no conflict between science and religion, but only a conflict between imperfect science and a poor philosophy of religion. I say an imperfect science because the physical sciences have come by a devious route to an interpretation of the world of objective reality that allows for will, purpose, life, and other such concepts consistent with a religious interpretation of the universe after a long period of time in which such concepts were considered wholly unnecessary for an adequate interpretation. And I say a poor philosophy of religion because the God of religion, in as far as He is an object of experience, is never a part of the spatially objective world of the sciences.

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The statement is often made that mysticism is essentially non-social. While admitting that the religious experience is primarily a relation between the individual and God it does not follow that the mystic is a non-social being. Whence comes the social passion of such persons as Toyohiko Kagawa, Albert Schweitzer, Stanley Jones, to mention only a few outstanding Christians of our own day? As one reads the Prologue to "Love the Law of Life", one feels that he is moving in the same atmosphere that pervades the writings of mystics through the centuries of Christianity. Where can one find a more unreserved statement of the soul's utter abandonment to the love of its God than this: "I do not lose hope, nor do I fear when I see this drought in the land. I shall dig down deeper, still deeper, into my own soul, and there, in my heart of hearts, shall I find the spring of love which can never be found on the surface. I shall dig down to God who is within me. Then, if I strike the underground stream that murmurs softly in the depths of my heart, I will tenderly cherish this oasis of the soul--so rarely found--and to it will I lead thirsting comrades.

The Kingdom of Love has begun in my own soul; and little by little it is growing. Yet I do not expect it to grow without sacrifice. A cross awaits me on before. Then, let the cross, and death, too, come! If it be for the sake of love I will gladly die.

I have only one gospel, only one way of salvation: it



is that the cross be overpassed by Love. Through love all things are born again. Love alone is all powerful. Love creates, rears, leads. Love alone is eternal. Love created the world, and Love maintains the world. Love is the very essence of God.

When I must suffer to love I entrust my body; when I must die, to love I submit my soul. Love is the final conqueror of my heart. I am love's bond-slave. Oh, glorious bondage.

Where Love is, there is God. Love is my all in all."<sup>1</sup>

How are we to account for the experience which must lie behind such utterance?

It is obvious that we must look beyond superficial "psychological" explanations whether they masquerade under professorial colors or appear in the plain garb of the layman. The defenders of 'pure' ethical religion have a difficult problem on their hands explaining the experience which lies behind such utterance. If they take refuge in the "Psychological" theories which we considered above they must explain why their 'moral' experiences, from which they proceed to a knowledge of God, do not also fall beneath the same type of criticism and "explanation".

While recognizing that numbers do not determine truth, it is hard to dismiss from one's mind the impressive testimony of the vastly greater part of the human race which has

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<sup>1</sup>

Kagawa, Toyohiko "Love The Law of Life", Prologue.





espoused any religion which has been, that it has known  
God directly.



## RELIGION AS A DERIVATIVE OF THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN

The great majority of mankind has sought and found knowledge of God which was satisfactory to itself through immediate personal experience. But all men are not so constituted that their immediate intuitions are strong enough to convince them of the reality of the object of these intuitions. There are many who claim to have no such intuitions at all. And many others mistrust them because of some or all of the following reasons: they are purely personal and therefore cannot be verified; they defy conceptualization; they lack permanence; they are purely subjective, the person reporting them being mistaken in his belief that they are externally caused.

But the desire for certainty among such people concerning the object of their belief is just as strong as it is among those who claim to know God directly. They must find this in another way, so they turn to another realm of human experience, namely, the moral and seek to derive it from that.

The one whom we shall first consider as representative of this approach is Immanuel Kant. He did not seriously consider the possibility of immediate knowledge of God through direct experience. The negative aspects of his argument consisted in showing that the existence of God could not be demonstrated through pure reason. He then turned to



the "practical reason" or man's sense of moral obligation to establish the being of God on a philosophical basis.

The effort to demonstrate the being of God as a postulate of the moral nature of man has the merit of escaping the epistemological problem involved in the theories of direct perception, but it sacrifices the immediacy and certainty which are characteristic of those theories. The being of God becomes an inference not verifiable by anything beyond itself.

It is to this type of proof of the being of God that we now turn. We shall consider the theories of Kant, Ritschl, Hoffding, and Baillie in this order. The positions of all four are fundamentally the same, but they differ enough in particulars to warrant separate treatment of each of them.

Kant's proof of the existence of God starts with his concept of the "Summum Bonum". The Summum Bonum is the possession of virtue and happiness together. In other words, that man has the highest good whose desires and will correspond perfectly. How Kant arrived at this concept of the summum bonum is not our task to show. The summum bonum is constituted first of all by absolute obedience to the moral law upon which happiness follows as a necessary consequence of such obedience. This concept of the summum<sup>m</sup> bonum is a priori. It is not given in experience but is a product of transcendental deduction.

But in the actual world of activity and life, will and desire never perfectly correspond. And this is to be ex-





pected since man is finite and dependent upon the world in which he finds himself. The fulfillment of his desires is not wholly within his own hands but is dependent upon things over which he has no control. This, however, is not true of his will. This is absolutely free and undetermined by the world of nature.

But it does not follow that because the summum bonum does not exist in actual life that we should not seek for it. Quite to the contrary, the pursuit of the summum bonum is required by the moral will itself, or in the language of Kant, it is a postulate of the moral will, which is another way of saying that it is self-evident that it is best to seek the best. But if we ought to endeavor to promote the ~~summum~~<sup>s</sup> summum bonum, it must therefore be possible, or in other words there is some being in whom will and desire are in perfect accord. And since this being cannot be a part of nature, for he would thereby be dependent upon it and the harmony could not exist, he must be independent of it and the cause of it.

But a being that is capable of acting according to law is also an intelligence. Therefore, the supreme cause of nature which is God is both intelligence and will.

But Kant does not stop here. He not only finds the notion of God to be a postulate of the summum bonum but the idea that we are under obligation to believe in that God as being also a postulate.



In something of his own language, since it is a duty to presuppose the summum bonum, it is also a duty to presuppose the existence of God because God is the ground of existence of the summum bonum.

Kant qualifies this position, however, by admitting that the moral necessity involved is subjective, or a "want," and not objective, i.e., a duty, "for there cannot be a duty to suppose the existence of anything".

To summarize Kant's position in his own words: "In this manner the moral laws lead through the conception of the summum bonum as the object and final end of pure practical reason to religion, that is, to the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions, that is to say, arbitrary ordinances of a foreign will and contingent in themselves, but as essential laws of every free will in itself, which nevertheless, must be regarded as commands of the Supreme Being, because it is only from a morally perfect (holy and good) and at the same time all-powerful will, and consequently only through harmony with this will, that we can hope to attain the summum bonum which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavors." <sup>1</sup>

We have diverged into the obscurities of Kantian language to this extent rather than attempting to paraphrase and reduce to simpler terms in order to give a taste of Kant's method of approach to this profound problem. The

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Kant, "Selections", ed. by Theodore Green, p. 365.





rigorous logical method which he employs and the keen insight which he displays carry with them a convincing power which adds immeasurably to the persuasion of his arguments. One hesitates to rephrase his arguments in simpler terms not only because it is difficult to match the accuracy of the language he uses with any simpler language without dropping some of the strands of his argument, but because one almost feels a reverent regard for the actual words which come from the mind of so profound a thinker. It is almost to profane Kant to put his thoughts in the language of the street.

However, it is not our business to eulogize Kant's method but to explain it as a means to the knowledge of God. And the real conviction his argument carries after all derives its force from an experience common to human nature when it is trying to live a life of regard for the highest it knows.

But the question is, how much force is there in the argument? Does the possibility of the summum bonum postulate its existence, and the existence of God? Only in the end, as he admits, as belonging to the domain of speculative reason.<sup>1</sup> Kant considered as a principle of explanation, it is a hypothesis. As a means to meet the practical requirements of life, it may be called a faith. In other

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, "Selections", p. 363.



words the "necessity" which is postulated is a theoretical necessity which will be considered convincing or not as the person does or does not already believe that there is a God.

Kant himself was not satisfied with the argument. He realized that it was too theoretical and sought for an argument more convincing than that afforded by the appeal to the concept of the summum bonum. After his death there was found in his unpublished notes the results of his effort to work out a more satisfactory proof. There are distinguishable three forms of this new attempt. "In one set of passages Kant maintains that the religious interpretation of all duties as divine commands is not a supplementary, later, interpretation but is, for every moral being, immediately and necessarily given together with the apprehension of the duties, i.e., the categorical imperative leads directly to God, and affords surety of his reality. 'In the morally-practical Reason lies the categorical imperative, to regard<sup>1</sup> all human duties as divine commands'."

"In the second set of passages, Kant makes no reference to the existence of God but only to the Idea of God." And again it is the concept of duty which leads directly to the Idea of God.

"In yet another set of passages, Kant suggests that God Himself, and not merely the Idea of God as a trans-subjective  
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<sup>1</sup>  
Kant, "Selections", p. 372.



Being, is immanent in the human spirit. God is not a being outside me, but merely a thought in me. God is the morally practical self-legislative Reason."

Even in these approaches, however, there is no radical departure from the earlier method. The approach to God is still through the moral nature of man. The main difference is that what he formerly arrived at through a long logical process he now seeks to grasp through more immediate inference. He is simply cutting out one link in the chain of inference. But it is still inference.

Ritschl made use of a modified form of the Kantian distinction between the world of forms and the world of values. Religion is concerned with our consciousness of value and consists in faith in the reality of the object of that consciousness. Kant and Lotze made a clear cut distinction between fact and value. But Ritschl saw that it was impossible to make any such absolute distinction, that what we consider to be fact is partly determined by what has value for us. All religious affirmations are thus essentially judgements of value.

Ritschl makes a distinction between what he calls 'concomitant' and 'independent' value judgments. A concomitant value judgment is one which is made when our interest is in some perceived fact. Our primary interest is in the observation of the thing as a fact. But consciously or unconsciously we are also interested in its worth. Even in





our most dispassionate, scientific observations, we are influenced to some extent by previous and private conceptions of worth.

But sometimes our interest is not in a perceived fact but in an ideal order; and these direct affirmations of the ideal are 'independent' value judgments. Religion, therefore, which is concerned with the ideal order, is a matter of independent value judgments. It is not meant by this that the objects of these judgments do not have real existence. Quite to the contrary, Ritschl would insist that their existence is of the most real sort, an existence governed by laws as binding as those which obtain in the natural realm.

We now pass to another representative of the same type of approach to the problem of the knowledge of God, namely Hoffding. For this philosopher, the problem of religion is the problem of the fate of values in the battle of existence. All religion presupposes the experience of values. In his own words: "Different kinds of value correspond to different kinds of feeling. One group of values is connected with self-assertion, from its most elementary up to its most idealistic form. Another group of values is connected with surrender to beings, circumstances, and tasks which point beyond the conditions of isolated self-assertion---among these belong the ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual feelings. The possibility of a third group of values---the re-



ligious values---depends on whether the first two groups, those of self-assertion and surrender, are both attained and retained in existence as it presents itself to us." But the human being is not just a passive spectator of this struggle of values for existence. "He will in his innermost being, and for the sake of the highest values which he knows, feel so drawn into the whole great order and course of things, that, according to the fate of these values, a lively feeling of pain or of pleasure will arise in him . . . "The feeling which is determined by the fate of values in the struggle for existence is the religious feeling."<sup>1</sup> . . . . "Religious judgments, therefore, are secondary judgments of value; in comparison with the primary judgments of value in which the first two groups find expression, they are derivative."<sup>2</sup>

To be sure, the experience of life, truth, beauty, and goodness may arise at the same point of time as the experience of their relation to existence. The two need not necessarily occur at different points of time and quite often do not. The distinction between the two types of valuation is not temporal but is psychological.

We hardly seem to be following in the tradition of Kant in such a theory as this. However, the problem, though  
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<sup>1</sup> Höffding, Harold "Philosophy of Religion", p. 104.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 104.





stated differently, is fundamentally the same. We hear a faint echo of the Kantian view of the problem in such a statement as this: "The presentiment must arise that the principle of the world of values is in the end identical with the principle of causal connexion within existence--- that it is one and the same thing which enables us to find values in existence and which makes this existence comprehensible to us."<sup>1</sup>

Faith, on the part of the individual is closely allied to an act of the will. In its simplest forms it is an instinctive confidence, but when the opposition between value and reality becomes sharp and harsh then faith appears as desire, wish, purpose or resolve.

God is the principle of the continuity of existence from a purely theoretical point of view. "From the religious point of view, God, as the object of faith, means the principle of the conservation of value throughout all oscillations and all struggles, or, if we like to call it so, the principle of fidelity of existence."<sup>2</sup> If the religious problem is ever to be completely solved, the coincidence of these two principles must be demonstrable." We will have more to say later concerning the possibility of demonstration of the coincidence of these two principles.

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<sup>1</sup> Höffding, "Philosophy of Religion", p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 129.



We have seen that psychologically the value experience occasioned by the act of faith in the conservation of values is not primary but depends upon a prior experience of values, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic, etc. And the same relation exists between ethics and religion as exists between the experience of values and faith in their conservation. Ethics is the process by which values are discovered and produced in the world, but this process must take place before faith in their status in reality can be thought of or felt. Justice, goodness, honesty, etc., have their value independently<sup>1</sup> of the will of any supreme being. Indeed, as Höffding says: "Religious and ethical motives need not stand in a relation of complete opposition to one another, for religious motives may include ethical within themselves.<sup>1</sup> There is a certain distinct ethical value in the religious faith in their conservation. In doing the good deed, the doer may think that he is doing it because it is the will of God, but actually its value was determined and acknowledged before those qualities were predicated of God. "Discussion", concludes Höffding, "is always led back by implacable logic to the conceptual priority of ethics over religion."<sup>2</sup>

The fourth representative of the 'moral' approach to religion whom we wish to consider is Baillie. There is nothing essentially novel in his method of approach. There

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<sup>1</sup> Höffding, "Philosophy of Religion", p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 323.



is in it a clear reflection of Höffding's approach by way of value theory. The central concern of religion, says Baillie, is the relation of value to reality, or again, "What lies at the heart of religion is a projection of our moral values into the real order of things"; or again he speaks of religion as "an apprehension of reality through, and in terms of, our moral values." His definition of religion is as follows:  
"Religion is a moral trust in reality".<sup>1</sup> Baillie, however, thinks that Höffding's statement of the nature of religion is not positive enough. It is not enough merely to be assured of the conservation of values. They may be conserved in a hostile world. We must be assured of their supremacy.

But how, now, do we arrive at the concept of a God and faith in Him? Our starting point is the certitude of duty. "Unless appeal can be made to it, religious assurance can never be brought to birth in the soul. Unless the ultimate beliefs of religion can be brought home to an already-existing conscience, they will never appear to be more than pleasing fancies or interesting guesses at truth."<sup>2</sup> The authority of the moral conscience is final. There can be no arguing about its commands. But the question remains how to pass from this certitude to the further certitude of faith. The answer seems to be much the same as that which Kant gave.

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<sup>1</sup> Baillie, "Interpretation of Religion", p. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 342.





namely, that the immediate certainty of duty also carries with it an immediate certainty concerning its absolute status. The claim of duty "tends to create for itself a certain context of beliefs about the real constitution of things."

The process by which we reach this second step is logical implication. This does not mean that we go through a conscious process of logical deduction in reaching it. It is more direct than that. "The truth is that, under the long tuition of moral experience, the consciousness of the moral claim comes, by an almost imperceptible transition of thought, to be interpreted as an awareness of a Divine Reality. The process is not really a passage from believing in duty to believing in something else but is much rather a passage from one way of reading the meaning of duty to another way of reading it."<sup>1</sup>

The question will arise concerning the relation between the experience feeling of duty and its ultimate ground in reality. Does duty derive its authority purely from the experience of its command or does its authority depend upon the nature of Reality? Which is prior? The answer we give to that will determine our answer to another question which is one of the main objectives of our inquiry, namely, are we -----

<sup>1</sup> Baillie, "Interpretation of Religion", p. 348.



able to arrive at final certainty concerning the existence of God from our own inner moral experience?

To answer the question concerning the priority of the moral experience, or its ground in Reality, we need to call to mind the distinction between what is called the 'ratio cognoscendi' and the 'ratio essendi'. The 'ratio essendi' or 'order of being' in the relationship existing between a star and the light it gives off, is first the star and then the light. But the 'ratio cognoscendi' or 'order of knowing' is the light and then the star; that is, we know the star is there by reason of the light which we perceive, but in order of being, the light did not come first but the star.

Now in our problem if the order of being is different from the order of knowing then the ultimate ground for the authority of the moral imperative is in God or whatever we consider to be the creator of our selves. But if they are the same, then the call of duty does not derive its authority from anything beyond itself. Baillie, however, concludes that "No obligation can be absolute which does not  
<sup>1</sup> derive from the Absolute." Does this then allow us to pass from the certainty of the inner command of duty to an equal certainty concerning its ground in Reality? We have seen how Kant dealt with the same problem and answered the

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<sup>1</sup> Baillie, "Interpretation of Religion", p. 350.





question in the negative. We can derive only 'subjective' certainty, or in other words, one who already believes that an ultimate ground for the inner moral experience exists will take that inner experience as a proof of the existence of God. This does not constitute a final and absolute proof of the existence of God. It is simply an attempt "to make fully explicit faith's own implicit logic".

It is extremely obvious by this time that the process by which our moral philosopher attempts to reach God is in sharpest contrast to that by which the mystic knows God.

Thus far we have presented the views of these moral philosophers as though their positions were entirely self-consistent. We have done this, however, to set forth a representative type of approach to the problem we are considering and not to expound the views of the several men we have mentioned. However, in presenting these views in this simplified manner we have passed over certain elements or factors in their thinking that do not fit into the theories they expound.

We have already seen how Kant tried to escape from the difficulty which he saw in the extremely theoretical nature of his proof of the existence of God. He sought to shorten the deductive process by eliminating one of the steps. The various theories which he proposed in lieu of his first theory, however, remained within the bounds of the moral approach.



But this was not true of Ritschl. He was able to see that all religions did not have the same ethical content, and what is more important, that those which were, shall we say, deficient in ethical content were just as truly religion as those with more ethical content, such as Christianity. And in attempting to take account of these "nature religions" we find inconsistencies in his analysis. Said he, "The peculiar nature of religious value-judgments is less clear in the case of religions of an explicitly ethical character", thus recognizing that in religions which are not of an explicitly ethical character, the nature of the value-judgment peculiar to religion is more clear. He continues, "Nevertheless, in Christianity which is of a highly ethical character, we can distinguish between the religious functions which relate to our attitude towards God and the world, and the moral functions which point directly to men, and only indirectly to God, whose end in the world we fulfil by moral service in the Kingdom of God."<sup>1</sup>

It is evident that Ritschl's experience of religion was too broad to be kept within the confines of a purely moral interpretation. That he is not fully aware of the implications for his value-judgment theory of religion of his admission that there is a value-judgment peculiar to religion alone is evidence by the way he continued to present these

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<sup>1</sup> Ritschl, "Justification and Reconciliation", 2nd edition. T&T Clark, Edinburgh. p. 206.





contradictory elements together.

Höffding fully recognized the distinction between what he called "nature" and "ethical" religion and has much to say about the relation between the two in his consideration of ethics and religion. The difference between the two is the difference between power and goodness.<sup>1</sup> In nature religions, men perform rites to keep arbitrary deity within bounds. "The gods appear as powers upon which man is dependent, but not as patterns of conduct or administrators of an ethical world-order."<sup>2</sup> Then as man discovers certain ethical principles which govern his conduct in society, he ascribes these to the deity, and the transition is made to ethical religion. But whence this idea of gods of 'power' who must be propitiated? Höffding leaves no room in his philosophy of religion for any such thing as this. He recognizes the existence of these 'nature religions' and then promptly forgets them. And we might ask, whence the idea of power which is ascribed to deities even after the transition has been made and religion has become 'ethical'? That it is not dropped but is rather strengthened by being combined with ethical elements is evidence that it is not passing phase of religion but is an integral part of it. Indeed, is the concept of power more native to any religion than to

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<sup>1</sup> Höffding, Harold "Philosophy of Religion", p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 316.





Christianity which is also the most highly ethical, for here power is conceived of in terms of universal law from which man may not escape by making sacrifice of things?

The difference between power and goodness comes to us even in our present advanced conception of Christianity. It is reflected in the effort of faith to believe that tragedies which befall the human race from sudden changes in man's physical environment, such as earthquakes, storms, etc., are somehow connected with the benevolent divine purpose of the Universe, and are not evidences of a ruthless and indifferent system.

There is a certain fact of human experience which has always been a puzzle to certain self-righteous types of religious people---the fact that many of those who have lived utterly reprobate lives have been granted the sweetest and deepest visions of Divine Reality. I am thinking particularly of Francis Thompson who stood "amid the dust o' the mounded years", having pulled his life <sup>down</sup> upon him, one who, according to all the canons of virtue, must be judged a moral failure, and yet perhaps found God more real, if indeed more poignantly real, because of that failure. Surely such a one must despair of finding a God if he must take the straight and narrow path prescribed by the moral law within. But happily God has not left us to valiantly labor for knowledge of His being by convincing ourselves that there is such a Being who is the ultimate ground of our inner



moral experience. If degree of certainty of the existence of God depended upon moral rectitude, then few of us indeed would be very sure that God existed. If certainty of the existence of God corresponds with certainty concerning the "conservation of values" in the order of existence, then many have scant faith in the existence of such a Being for they have known little of these "values" which some of the more socially and economically favored of us feel are worth conserving. If certainty concerning the existence of God depended upon the authority of the claim of the "summum bonum" upon his choices and activities, then surely St. Augustine would never have come to the place he did in the Christian world. This is the incontrovertible and glorious fact of the Christian religion, and indeed of all religion--for its foundations lie deep within the nature of religion itself--that God does not limit his revelation of himself to those who have triumphed in the moral struggle or who have been endowed by nature and circumstance with the ability to experience life's "values": aesthetic, intellectual, and moral, to the full. He has a language all his own which he uses to speak directly to the hearts of men.

Some one may answer this by saying that such a direct revelation of God to man comes after a man has come to feel keenly his own moral delinquency and need of being made right. In many cases this may be so, but in many other





cases not so. If there has been any relation between moral repentance and the experience of God's grace, I think that a little careful introspection would reveal that the order is: first, a dawning sense of the reality and intimate presence of God, and then, an overwhelming sense of moral failure.

However, the sense of moral failure is not necessarily a concomitant of the experience of the presence of God. To be sure, there is a sense of a tremendous void between the one undergoing the experience and God, but it is not a moral void. It is, if we may use a term outside of its usual meaning, metaphysical. However, we will consider this in more detail under the subject of atonement.



## A SYNTHESIS

The purpose of any philosophy and the only excuse for it is that it be an interpretation of facts of experience. We have, in the course of our discussion, discovered, or rather noted, certain facts of human experience that required interpretation. Among these is the fact that man comes into direct contact with God, and that somehow, out of this contact arise ethical ideals; also that these nebulous ethical intuitions become embodied in moral codes, they become rationalized and made fully explicit, and through them, man is led back to God from which they came. We thus have two contrasted processes: one from God to ethical ideals, and the other from the ethical ideals to God. Each, as we have seen involves an epistemological process which we have attempted to examine.

The question now becomes, is there no epistemological theory which can incorporate both processes in itself and, without doing violence to either, be entirely self-consistent? It must be apparent that there is need for such a theory. The mystic doesn't tell the whole truth about God. His way of knowing satisfies the demand for immediacy in knowing, but it sacrifices explicit content in the thing known, both as to the nature of God and moral obligations following upon that knowledge. The rationalist, on the other hand, meets the demand for explicit content but fails to meet the demand for immediacy in knowledge.



Neither is satisfactory or complete without the other.

We turn for a solution of the problem to Otto who, in "The Idea of the Holy" sets forth a theory of the nature of the knowing process in religion which is based upon Kant's conception of a priori and yet carries the implications of Kant's theory farther than Kant himself did.

Kant saw that to avoid the skepticism in which empiricism ends, there must be certain elements fundamental to having knowledge at all which are not derived from experience but which are independent of it. These elements he found in the categories which he labeled quantity, quality, relation, and modality with three subdivisions under each of these main divisions. It is by these alone that the mind can think an object. They are a priori, that is, not derived from experience, but are supplied by the mind as the *sine qua non* of any kind of knowledge.

Otto does not proceed directly from Kant but rather from the Kantian, Fries, who developed Kant's theory of a priori along a line which Kant was unwilling to follow. The important departure which Fries made from Kant was in claiming that the a priori categories are not only the necessary condition of knowledge about the Thing-in-itself but that they are themselves objectively valid for that Thing, a conclusion from which Kant turned. Kant denied that space and time had any objective validity. "Space does not represent any quality of objects by themselves, or objects in their





relation to one another; i.e., space does not represent any determination which is inherent in the objects themselves, and would remain, even if all subjective conditions of intuition were removed.<sup>1</sup> The same thing is true of time.

"Time is not something existing by itself, or inherent in things as an objective determination of them, something, therefore that might remain when abstraction is made of all subjective conditions of intuition."<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen how he denied any objective necessity to his arguments for the existence of God, which proceeded from the a priori conception of the *summum bonum*.

But this was not satisfactory to Fries.

It is patent that his is a radical departure from Kant, and must offer a whole new field of interpretation. The a priori now becomes not only the form of knowledge but an objective quality of whatever objects the mind apprehends.

Kant had presumed to offer a complete and closed system of all the possible a prioris. Troeltsch denied that this could be done, but insisted that the list must be subject to constant revision in the light of possible new experience. He discovered what he called the 'religious' a priori.

It is to the further development of this idea by Otto in his "Idea of the Holy" that we now turn. In the language

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<sup>1</sup> Kant, "Critique of Pure Reason", Selections, ed. by T.M. Greene, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 52.



of Otto, the category of the Holy is a complex category composed of rational and non-rational elements. We have already seen the objection which the rationalist has made to the mystic's account of God, that it lacked explicit content. Otto recognizes the merit of this objection on the very first page of his book. He says, ". . . we count this the very mark and criterion of a religion's high rank and superior value--that it should have no lack of conceptions about  
<sup>1</sup>  
God."

The religious a priori is the category of the 'holy'. As we have said, this is a complex category, containing non-rational and rational elements. We turn now to an exposition of the non-rational element to which Otto gives the name *Mysterium Tremendum Numinosum*, or more briefly, the numinous. This is a mental state "perfectly sui generis and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being  
<sup>2</sup>  
discussed, it cannot be strictly defined." Otto, however, does not mean that we cannot attempt to describe it. Perhaps the most valuable contribution he makes is his description of the numinous experience.

Otto takes up first an analysis of the Tremendum. The first element in this experience is that of Awefulness. The  
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<sup>1</sup> Otto, Rudolph "Idea of the Holy", p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 7.





first thing which comes to the reader's mind in trying to understand this element is the emotion of fear. But this is different from fear. This is more than a difference of intensity, --"no natural fear passes over into it by merely being intensified". It is qualitatively different from fear. There is an element of uncanniness in it which is not present in natural fear no matter how intense. And this element of awe or uncanniness does not disappear even on the highest level of experience, when the worship of God is purest. The reaction of the person undergoing the experience of awe is to abase himself. The soul is held speechless and there is an inward 'shudder' which penetrates to the soul's very depths. This quality of experience, which in primitive religion takes the form of daemonic dread, is not lost even in the most highly developed religion.

This is not merely a psychological report of the person having the experience. This quality of experience brings into relief a property of the cause of the experience. The Old Testament calls it the 'wrath of Jahveh'. This is not to be taken as 'natural' wrath. There is a super-natural or numinous quality about it. It is also to be distinguished from the notion of righteousness in punishment for moral transgression, although it is an element in this idea.

The second element in the experience of the Tremendum is that of 'Overpoweringness' or majesty. It is especially in relation to this element of majesty that the creature-



consciousness of Schleiermacher comes on the scene as a sort of subjective reflection of it. As self-depreciation and humility, this occupies an important place in the reports of the mystics.

The third element in the Tremendum is that of Energy or Urgency. "It is particularly vividly perceptible in the 'Wrath'; and it everywhere clothes itself in symbolical expressions---vitality, passion, emotional temper, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, impetus." <sup>1</sup> This plays an important part of the Mysticism of love "where it is forcibly seen in that 'consuming fire' of love whose burning strength, the mystic can hardly bear. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Otto next analyzes the Mysterium, which is the substantive of which the Tremendum is the adjective. It is best characterized by the term 'Wholly Other'. The quality of mystery is so closely bound up with its qualifying attribute 'aweful' that one cannot be suggested without suggesting the other, but they are nevertheless to be distinguished. The state of mind of the subject is one of blank wonder, absolute amazement. "The truly 'mysterious' object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently 'wholly other', whose kind and

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<sup>1</sup> Otto, Rudolph "Idea of the Holy" p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 24.





character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in wonder that strikes us chill and dumb." <sup>1</sup>

This is the quality of the mystic experience which makes him deny the possibility of applying any of the predicates of sense experience to it.

But there is another quality of the numinous experience which is in sharpest contrast to the element of Awefulness which we have already described. This is the element of Fascination. "The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time, the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own," <sup>2</sup> This gives rise in the mystics to such expressions as 'bliss' and 'beatitude' which are "more than the mere natural feeling of being comforted, of reliance, of the joy of love, however these may be heightened and enhanced."

It might seem to the reader that Otto has really described the numinous, something which the mystic denies can be done. However, we are continually warned that the words used in the description are meant to suggest and hint at elusive qualities of experience that escape conceptualiza-

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<sup>1</sup> Otto, Rudolph "Idea of the Holy", p.28.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 31.





tion. They are a description only to those who already know the quality of experience which they suggest.

We have described the non-rational element of the category of the holy. We now turn to the 'rational' element. The human mind is not content to let even its most elusive experiences remain outside the sphere of its conceptualizing activity. The result is that for every one of the non-rational elements which we have described there is an associated rational element which, in Kantian language, is the 'schematisation' of the non-rational element. Thus in the property of 'majesty' which we ascribed to deity as a result of the rationalization process, takes on elements from the moral reason and becomes righteousness in requital and punishment for moral transgression. The experience of Overpoweringness with its subjective accompaniment of humility and self-depreciation becomes, on the rational side, the consciousness of createdness and has as its counterpart, the Creator. The non-rational element Energy of Urgency has its rational counterpart in such symbolic expressions as vitality, passion, emotional temper, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, impetus, terms which are taken from the natural realm of experience. The quality of Wholly Other becomes the supernatural, the supramundane, the transcendent on the rational side. And lastly, the non-rational quality of Fascination becomes, on the rational side, love, mercy, pity, comfort.



This process is equivalent to the way the simple sense of 'ought', itself sui generis and irreducible, is rationalized or schematized by us more or less consciously into our moral codes. By the time we are mature enough to introspect we find this primitive sense already rationalized and realize that it is distinct from the particular ideas to which it is attached only after careful introspective analysis. Failure to make this distinction between the non-rational sense of ought and its rationalization has been responsible for the conclusion which many moralists, so-called, have come to, that because no two moral codes have ever been completely alike and have even directly contradicted each other in their teaching of what is right and wrong that therefore, morality is merely man-made and has no ultimate ground of authority.

A similar case is the connection of the category of Causality (following the theory of Kant) with its temporal 'schema', "the temporal sequence of two events, which by being brought into connexion with the Category of Causality<sup>1</sup> is known and recognized as a causal relation of the two.

"Now the relation of the rational to the non-rational element in the idea of the holy or sacred is just such a one of 'schematization', and the non-rational numinous fact, schematized by the rational concepts we have suggested above, yields us the complex category of the 'holy' itself, richly

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<sup>1</sup> Otto "Idea of the Holy", p. 46.





charged and complete in its fullest meaning." <sup>1</sup>

Incidentally we find in this principle of rationalization or schematization, the principle of explanation of the relation of man's instinct to his higher life. The sex instinct, for instance, itself non-rational, becomes rationalized or schematized, i.e., associated with ethical concepts. Likewise, the combative instinct. We must, however, remember that their origin is from a different 'side' of human nature from the religious and ethical a prioris that we mentioned.

The category of the holy is thus a complex category containing both rational and non-rational elements. It is, however, a priori. "Religion is not in vassalage either to morality or teleology, . . . and does not draw its life from postulates." <sup>2</sup>

The numinous itself is not derived from experience. Experience, sense impressions, give occasion for its incitement. "It (the numinous) issues from the deepest foundation of the cognitive apprehension that the soul possesses, and, though it of course comes into being in and amid the sensory data and empirical material of the natural world and cannot anticipate or dispense with those, yet it does not arise out of them, but only by their means. They are the incitement, the stimulus, and the 'occasion' for

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<sup>1</sup> Otto, "Idea of the Holy", p. 46.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 140.



the numinous experience to become astir, and, in so doing, to begin---at first with a naive immediacy of reaction---to be interfused and interwoven with the present world of sensuous experience, until, becoming gradually purer, it disengages itself from this and takes its stand in absolute contrast to it." <sup>1</sup>

That the rational element, or process, is a priori Kant showed convincingly. The holy as a category is thus a priori as to both of its elements and also in respect to the conjunction of these elements. "The histories of religion recount indeed, as though it were something axiomatic, the gradual interpretation of the two, the process by which 'the divine' is charged and filled out with ethical meaning. And this process is, in fact, felt as something axiomatic, something whose inner necessity we feel to be self-evident." <sup>2</sup>

What is the relation of the development and interpenetration of the two elements in point of time? "It (the rationalizing process) nearly, if not quite, synchronizes and keeps pace with the stages of the purely numinous development, and, like that, it can be traced in its different gradations in the most widely different regions of religious history. Almost everywhere we find the numinous attracting and appropriating meanings derived from social and individ-

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<sup>1</sup> Otto, "Idea of the Holy", p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 140.



ual ideals of obligation, justice, and goodness. These become the 'will' of the numen, and the numen their guardian, ordainer, and author. More and more these ideas come to enter into the very essence of the numen and charge the term with ethical content. 'Holy' becomes 'good', and 'good' from that very fact in turn becomes 'holy', 'sacrosanct'; until there results a thenceforth indissoluble synthesis of the two elements, and the final outcome is thus the fuller, more complex sense of the 'holy', in which it is as once  
<sup>1</sup>  
good and sacrosanct."

The question must arise as to the place of this category of the holy in a scheme of values. We have already seen how Hoffding assigned 'religious' values to a secondary place in his scheme. It is now evident that this does not satisfactorily account for religious values. We have discovered a unique element in religion, namely, the numinous. The creature-consciousness, with its concomitant feelings of abasement and prostration, brings forth a self-depreciating feeling response and a corresponding feeling or judgment of appreciation of the numen or deity. These feeling responses are marked by immediate spontaneity. They do not follow from deliberation. They are essentially judgments of value. They are, however, of a unique kind. Isaiah says 'I am a man of unclean lips and dwell among a people of unclean lips'.

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<sup>1</sup>  
Otto, "Idea of the Holy", p. 114.





This might seem at first sight to be a judgment of moral unworth, as of one who had just committed a great sin, and whose conscience was troubling him. But this would be a misreading of Isaiah and a misunderstanding of an important point of our thesis. This is a judgment of unworthiness which is not moral but, if we may use the term out of its proper and ordinary sense, metaphysical. Otto uses the term "profaneness" to suggest the peculiar qualitative nature of the feeling response.

It is essential to recognize the unique qualitative character of this experience for this is the very crux of the much argued problem as to whether or not there is an emotion peculiar to religion and a corresponding area of values.

It is not, however, our desire to single out this feeling and judgment of value peculiar to religion and leave it unrelated to other aspects of human experience. The history of religion shows that there has been a fairly close correspondence between religion and ethics and that each has had its influence upon the other. Men have found God through immediate apprehension of Him and out of this experience have given a reinterpretation of their social relations and their value experiences. And, likewise, their value experiences and social relations have reacted upon their religious consciousness to sharpen its sensitivity to the presence of the divine.



Is it untrue, then, to say that there are two ways of knowing God, one by way of direct apprehension and the other by way of man's moral nature? Our problem has been to find a theory which would fit the facts of experience, namely, that the two processes are often, if not usually, united in the same person. I think we may confidently affirm that we have found the key to the interpretation of these facts which does not do violence to any aspect of man's experience.

It is not our purpose to work out all the implications of this method of interpretation. But it opens the way to new interpretations of many old problems of theology and philosophy. We have what appears to be a new field of values, the 'Holy' in addition to the time honored triad of the True, the Beautiful, and the Good. It has important implications for the theory of atonement in theology.

On the practical side, a proper understanding must check any over-emphasis whether it be on the side of ethics to the exclusion of mysticism or on mysticism to the exclusion of ethics.





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